Under the Blossom.

BY MARGARET HAYCRAFT, AUTHOR OF "LINDENHOLM," "AMARANTH'S GARDEN," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"A RED LETTER DAY."

"HOW I wish it could always be Saturday!"

"Oh, Iris! I think that is the hardest day of all the week."

But Iris Elwood, who had little to do with the details of cleaning and sweeping, took her place at the breakfast-table with a sigh of relief at the thought that she had not to hurry off as usual to the customary round of unwelcome teaching.

Her mother looked up at her anxiously. Delicate herself and overworked, Mrs. Elwood was always in dread lest her children should break down in health owing to the necessity laid upon them now to work hard, and carefully consider ways and means.

"You must rest to-day, darling," she said. "I wish you could find a lighter engagement than teaching in Miss Crockard's school, but the money *is* such a help, and Miss Crockard, of course, is not like a stranger — in many ways she does her best to spare you, I know."

"Oh, I shall always hate teaching," said Iris, carelessly; "it is so terribly monotonous—just an endless repetition of commonplaces. But what else is one to do? I can't paint pictures, or write books, or lecture, like some women can, so I suppose I must be content to coach the girls at Miss Crockard's for many a long year yet."

"Not a day longer than Jack can help, though," said her sister Nelly, decisively.

"Jack!" Iris sighed again, this time a little impatiently. "Why, Nelly, what chance of making a home has a young journalist, without interest or connection to help him on? We are quite prepared to wait till the time of grey hairs; I

"'Tea's ready, Jack, and there are scones!'"

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have no desire to marry just to be perpetual maid-of-all-work."

Mrs. Elwood was too gentle-natured to remind her daughter that she had begged her to think well over the matter of entering into an engagement that bade fair to be so lengthy. There had been one or two stormy scenes anent the question of the engagement, but the mother had ere this become more than reconciled to the idea, for she had gauged John Hyldon's character as true and steadfast, and she knew him as a willing, tireless toiler. It was Iris herself who seemed a little dissatisfied, now the first glamour of being betrothed had worn off. Iris had a way of getting tired of things when they ceased to be a novelty, and she certainly wished in her secret thoughts that her *fiancé* were as well-to-do as the head of the banking firm—Mr. Burner—whom one of her former school-fellows had espoused, winning mention among the "Fashionable Marriages," and insertion of her photograph and Mr. Burner's in a society journal.

"What a girl you are!" laughed pleasant-faced Nelly; "what are you sighing for now, Iris?"

"I was thinking of those words of Whittier's—

'Alas! of all words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these—it *might* have been!'"

"Well," said practical Nelly, "of course, if father had not lost so much in that mine, we *might have been* better off now; but I am sure we have no need to complain. We can pay our rent and get food and clothing, and though I am not clever like you, I can teach Clover and Colin, and save keeping a servant now. It is so nice that all of us can be together; I do feel sorry for people when losing money makes them obliged to give up the old home, and scatter themselves here and there to find work."

Just then the conversation was drowned by a shout—in rushed Clover and Colin, the nine-year-old twins, the youngest of a large family, many of which died in infancy and childhood.

"We've been down the lane to meet the postman!" shouted Clover, "because Sophia promised us a present from Hastings, when she got into her new situation, and here it is! and there's a letter for mother too—a grand letter with an animal's head or something on the envelope."

The children brought their packet to Nelly, who with great interest and expectancy untied the string and produced for Colin a shell money-box, and for Clover a little pebble brooch.

"But I haven't any money," said Colin, looking a little gloomy over the ornamental bank. Nelly soon brought a brighter look to his face by producing a penny from her own scanty store, which Colin dropped in for a nest-egg, quickly resolving to save up in view of mother's birthday; and Clover admired herself so much when the brooch was fastened at her neck, that only Iris noticed Mrs. Elwood's agitation over her letter.

"Mother, is something the matter?" she asked; "who is that letter from? can't we read it?"

Mrs. Elwood had no secrets from her grown-up girls, and she handed the letter to Iris, who read it aloud with excited look and tones:—

7, St. Alwys' Gardens, W.

DEAR HELEN,—I have only recently heard of your pecuniary losses, also that you are now a widow. How many years have elapsed since we were neighbours and playmates in our Kentish homes! Poor Mr. Danyers died in Italy five years ago, and I now reside chiefly in town, for the sake of my only child, Leila, who is delicate and requires livelier surroundings than the country can offer. In remembrance of past times, I am desirous of extending to you in your reverses a helping hand, and if you will send one of your family here on a long visit, I will do my best to render the change from country-life enjoyable and advantageous. "In haste, yours very sincerely,

"ALICIA DANYERS."

"Well, mother, this is a red-letter day indeed," cried Iris, examining the crest and the monogram; "but it will take nearly all my money this term to pay the fare to town and to get my things ready for the visit, won't it, mother?"

"Who is Mrs. Danyers, mother?' asked Nelly. "I have never heard of her before."

"Mother, you won't send me away, will you?" asked Colin, who had a vague idea that somebody was desiring one of Mrs. Elwood's family.

"I won't go," said sturdy Clover, "I can't bear London; pickpockets live there and burglars—Sophia told me so."

"There are many good, kind people in London too, my pet," said her mother, who looked startled and perplexed. "But, Iris, I do not think this letter need be answered at once. It seems to me such a proposal as this is a matter to be thought over—to be prayed about," she added in earnest tones. "We may make some mistake if we decide hastily; let us wait, dear child, and ask to be directed and guided in this matter."

"Why, mother," said Iris, excitedly, "it is quite providential. You know I would not upset you by complaining, but really I have had headaches at school of late, and people have noticed how pale I look at times; Dr. Weston told me the other day, when I met him in the High Street, that I ought to be taking iron."

"Oh, Dr. Weston, what does *he* know?" cried Nelly, who somehow could not be reconciled to the fact that a stranger should be medical practitioner in Bayston now, instead of her own dear father, who was so long the one doctor of the place.

"Dr. Weston holds very high qualifications, I am told," said Iris, "so his opinion is worth something, I should think. I am sure I need a thorough change, and it will be a great help to mother to be saved my board; Miss Crockard will spare me at once, I know, for the holidays are quite near. Mother, let me answer the letter for you, and say I will come up at the end of next week."

"*You* won't go, will you, Nelly? We never could do without Nelly," said Clover.

"I don't see," said Nelly, "how we can do without your help here, Iris; what you contribute is such a help towards the rent."

"Oh, it is not that," said Mrs. Elwood, hastily—"we shall manage, my dear; if it comes to the worst, we might let part of the house perhaps. And you and I, Nelly, must not be too proud to undertake a little dressmaking when we can get it, for that seems to be my one talent. There are other reasons why I hesitate to decide at once. My children have been brought up very quietly, and dear father and I have tried to surround them with Christian influences; I am not sure if this household is one that will be helpful to a young girl, in the surroundings and habits of the place."

"Why, mother, they are not heathen," said Iris, "and what could be quieter than a family consisting of a widowed mother and her daughter? I hope my principles are firm enough to resist temptation, but what harm I could possibly get by availing myself of this warm invitation I fail to see! Of course, if Nelly wants to go, I should not wish to stand

n her light," she added, glancing rather anxiously at her sister.

Nelly *did* want to go very much ; she was only nineteen, and had an impression, derived from a childish visit to town with her father, that London meant a round of Madame Tussaud's, Crystal Palace, Zoological Gardens, and the like. How delightful it would be to enjoy herself once more after this fashion ! But the remembrance came to her that somebody must help the charwoman on washing-days, and someone must keep the home clean, and light the kitchen fire, and make the beds, and cook the meals—"mother" could not do all this alone. No, she felt she could not possibly be spared, and, besides, she knew Iris longed to be the one selected.

"You are the eldest, Iris," she said, "so if anyone goes, I suppose you must be the one. But, oh dear, how we shall miss you ! and as for poor Jack ! "

Iris scarcely heard this latter exclamation. "Yes, of course, you will miss me at first, Nelly dear," she said ; "but think of all I shall be able to do for you and mother and the children ! I believe my cultivation of this friendship will turn out to be the making of the family."

CHAPTER II.

IN THE GARDEN.

THAT was a delightful day for Iris ; she learnt as much as she could concerning the writer of the invitation—how she and Mrs. Elwood had been girl friends, till "mother" rather came down in the world by marrying a young doctor, and Alicia Graham espoused a rising barrister who had *continued* to rise till there came a break-down in health. The girls knew that Dr. Elwood had invested his wife's fortune, whereby he expected to provide comfortably for the children, in mining speculations that proved disastrous ; the losses had probably hastened his end, but his widow and children had managed to stay on at Lime-Tree Grange, the landlord allowing them now to be yearly tenants.

John Hyldon, after his walk from the neighbouring town of Wykford, thought the pretty country house had never looked fairer than on that Saturday afternoon ; he had managed to come over unexpectedly, and he enjoyed the thought of taking Iris by surprise. The garden door in the wall was unfastened, and in he went, putting his hand over Clover's mouth, as he came across the child playing with her dolls on the lawn.

"Don't call out, Clovie. I want to surprise Iris ; tell me where she is."

"She's in the breakfast-room, showing Nelly how to alter mother's grey silk for her," said Clover, in a whisper. "I say, Jack, I'll tell you something if you give me some toffee—no, I forgot, mother said I must never say that ; but you *have* brought the toffee, haven't you ?" she asked anxiously. "That's right—well, I'll tell you *without;* mother says I mustn't want bribes. Iris is going to London to be a grand lady, and be presented to her Majesty the Queen at a drawing-room, perhaps ; Iris told me so while we made the beds this morning. I'm so glad it's Iris, and not Nelly ! "

John Hyldon thought his lady-love had been relating some fairy-tale to amuse the little girl. He deposited a bag of sweets in the lap of Clover's principal doll, and went on to the house, where he certainly took Iris by surprise, but received an uncomfortable impression that for once he was rather in the way.

"You here to-day ? " she exclaimed, "and I have a list of things to make out for Nelly to get on Monday, and all this unpicking to do ! I am very busy, Jack ; it is settled that I am to go up to town to-day week, on a visit to the Danyers, of St. Alwys' Gardens. Mrs. Danyers and mother knew each other long ago, and I shall be like another daughter of the house ; there is only one girl, so it will be nice for her to have a companion."

"Going to London, Iris ! " said John Hyldon, looking extremely disconcerted for a moment ; "but for how long ? This is very sudden, is it not ? "

"Iris dear, I can manage the unpicking," said Nelly ; "you go out in the garden with Jack till tea-time. We did not expect to see you over here to-day, Jack."

"No ; I came over to tell Iris a bit of news. I have been offered a post on the *Western Telephone*—a post holding good chance of promotion."

"Why, Jack, you *are* fortunate ! " said Nelly. "Did you know anyone on that paper ? "

"No ; but the editor says he likes my articles in the *Wykford Times.* I shall be away next week making arrangements, but I shall not have to desert this neighbourhood ; the publishers of the *Telephone* are very enterprising, and I fancy they have some idea of buying the *Wykford Times.*"

"But, Jack," said Nelly, "if you will be away next week, this is 'good-bye,' for Iris goes on Saturday. You two will want a long talk, so I shall just turn you out into the garden ! "

Jack led the way to their favourite retreat, a seat beneath the boughs of a spreading lime-tree, now garlanded with sweet-smelling blossoms. The air was filled with the scent of the bloom, and all around the old-fashioned garden was gay with roses and lilies and blushing carnations ; it was a fair summer scene. But the joy had gone from John Hyldon's heart ; he could not bear the thought of losing Iris, and then he blamed himself for selfishness in grudging the weary little teacher an enjoyable trip to town !

"Come, sweetheart," said he, taking into his own the hand that bore his simple betrothal ring ; "tell me all about your London plans, and how long you will be away."

"I have no idea, Jack," she answered, her thoughts busy just then with the fresh trimming her best hat would surely need, ere it was ready to make its appearance in St. Alwys' Gardens.

"No idea how long you will be away, Iris ! " said John Hyldon in astonishment.

"Of course not—now, where is that letter ? I thought I had it in my pocket ; oh, here it is ! You see I shall probably be like an adopted daughter to Mrs. Danyers, and like a sister to Leila ; no doubt it will be my future home, and I am sure I am heartily tired of Lime-Tree Grange, and of dull old Bayston."

"But, Iris, has your mother consented to give you up entirely, then ? " asked John, looking grave and concerned.

"Why, Jack, I am over age—I am twenty-two, and I can live where I like. Of course, I should not wish to act undutifully towards mother, but I have shown her it is for the best that I should accept this generous offer ; it would never do to miss such advantages."

"What advantages, Iris ? "

"Oh, London is full of advantages, of course, and we *must* do our best to get on in life, now our income is so small. Poor dear father was a great student, but he was so unbusinesslike ; he let other people make investments for him, and the whole thing that was to be so prosperous failed, as you know ! Now, my character is more prudent

and businesslike. I feel that by making influential friends I can help on Nelly and Clover, and do great things for Colin; boys need a start in life, and really we know nobody well-off here. Of course, one shrinks from going among strangers, but I feel it is my duty in the present case."

"Well, Iris, if *you* do not know how long you will be away, I can inform you," he said, gazing into the beautiful face that he was well aware could not miss admiration even amid a bevy of the daughters of fashion; "you may stay there, if you choose, till the nest is ready for my bird, but no longer. I really have hopes now of working my way up, for my book will be ready early next year, and this is a first-rate offer of the *Telephone* people. I shall work hard for your sake, my darling, and one of these days I shall appear in Kensington, or wherever this place may be, and bring you back to the hills and dales, to reign over our home and make summer weather by your sweet face there!"

Iris laughed and coloured, and leant back against him well content. After all, she felt she would sadly miss him amid her new surroundings; yet she would be quite ready, no doubt, for the happy time he pictured a year or two hence. Meanwhile it would be delightful to exchange the tiring teaching and the struggling family life, for ease and enjoyment with those to whom money was no consideration.

"You will make many new acquaintances, Iris," he said, rather wistfully, as he stroked her wavy hair; "perhaps some of them may want my dear little woman for their own, but you will be wearing your ring, so they will soon see such longings are hopeless."

"You silly old Jack! if I see *millions* and *millions* of men, I shall always be just the same. It will be like the song says, you know—

'All men besides are to me like shadows!'

I have no patience with girls who can be inconstant."

"And as you will be in London, Iris, you will go and see my married sister at Peckham, won't you? She is my only relation, you know, and she was like a mother to me; I hope you two will be great friends."

"Of course I will go and see her, Jack; her name is Harper, is it not?"

"Yes, she married a worthy fellow, one of the choir to which she used to belong; he has not had much education, but his heart is in the right place, and that is the great thing, after all."

"Of course it is, Jack; you must be sure and let me have their address. Why, the clock is actually striking five! How time seems to fly to-day!"

"Tea's ready, Jack, and there are scones!" cried Colin's shrill voice behind them just then; "and it isn't the salt butter—Nelly sent me for a quarter of a pound of fresh."

"I can't stay, Colin, say good-bye to the rest for me; I have work waiting, and I must hurry back," said the young man.

"But there's scones," persisted Colin, keeping his observant eyes fixed upon the couple that had now risen from the blossom-shadowed seat.

Nelly came into the porch, and called the boy away. It was a very tender parting beneath the lime-tree, watched only by the birds.

"Write to me often, Jack," said Iris, "and of course I will send you a letter every day. I am so glad I have your photograph, and then my ring will always be reminding me of you. You won't quite forget me, will you, when there are miles and miles between us?"

"Forget you, sweetheart? *Never!* here or there, you are always my own, and the one queen of my heart and life. God keep you, my darling, and unite us again before very long, nevermore to be parted!"

Iris watched him out of sight and turned back to the house with tearful eyes, that for awhile could scarcely contemplate the festal tea or the folds of grey silk, long laid by, that would now furnish forth her evening dress.

(To be continued.)

HOW SHE KEPT HER BOY.

"MOTHER, may I make some toffee?" said Willie Jones to his mother.

"Yes, my son, if you'll clean everything up nicely afterwards, and not make a mess."

So Mrs. Jones measured out the necessary materials for the toffee in the pan in which it was usually made. Willie had helped her make it a great many times, so he knew well enough how it should be done.

"If he spoils it," said his mother to herself, "a few pence will cover the loss, and he'll enjoy his fun."

So Willie washed his hands, put on an apron, and was merry as could be over his toffee-making.

Later he was permitted to make cake in the same way and on the same conditions. Sometimes, of course, he had failures, but they are steps in the upward progress of the mind from ignorance to knowledge.

"You must love noise and boys," said Mr. Jones to his wife one evening when he came home and found three or four boys with Willie, sitting round the table, and having rather uproarious fun with the game they were playing.

"I love Willie," replied Mrs. Jones. "He must have playmates, and if his friends come here and play with him in my presence, I know just what company he is in; but I don't know when he goes off somewhere else."

"Mother," said Mary, Willie's sister, "do make Willie sit in a chair and read. He is always lying down on the floor and supporting himself on his elbows while he reads."

"It is a good book he's reading, isn't it?" said Mrs. Jones.

"Oh, yes, indeed; it's 'The Lion City of Africa,'" replied Mary.

"Well, then, don't disturb him; he's happy and comfortable and well employed. Let him alone."

And so Mrs. Jones kept her boy near her, and made it pleasant for him to be near her. She was polite to him, as polite as if he had been somebody else's son instead of "only her own boy." She always said, "Please, Willie," do so and so, when she wanted anything done, and she thanked him for his attentions to her, and made him feel that his obedience and good-will were appreciated—that she loved him and confided in him and trusted him, and was never so happy as when he was with her.

So Willie adored his mother, and confided in her, and kept close to her. He grew up pure and sweet and happy, and polite and intelligent and manly.

We cannot keep our children too near our hearts, if our hearts are as they should be, for their welfare and for our own happiness.

THE THINGS MONEY CANNOT BUY.

A GROUP of ladies sat chatting as people do who meet infrequently. There was a grey-haired mother and widow, the woman of society, the ambitious wife, and the serene young mother—a curious yet interesting quartette, whose interests were varied, and whose lives were as different as they were separate.

At length the talk took a sordid, worldly turn. The elderly woman dwelt on matrimonial success and the shrewdness of some of her acquaintances, and the young lady dilated on her latest social advancement and on her gowns and surroundings. Thus stimulated, the ambitious woman graphically pictured her aims, and told what her money had brought, and should bring her, to give that flavour to all her plans and hopes, without which everything would be flat and void. Quietly the young mother spoke, half unconsciously, as if to herself: "I am thankful for the things that money cannot buy. There is a chance for me to have some of them. Better still, there is a chance for everybody to have them."

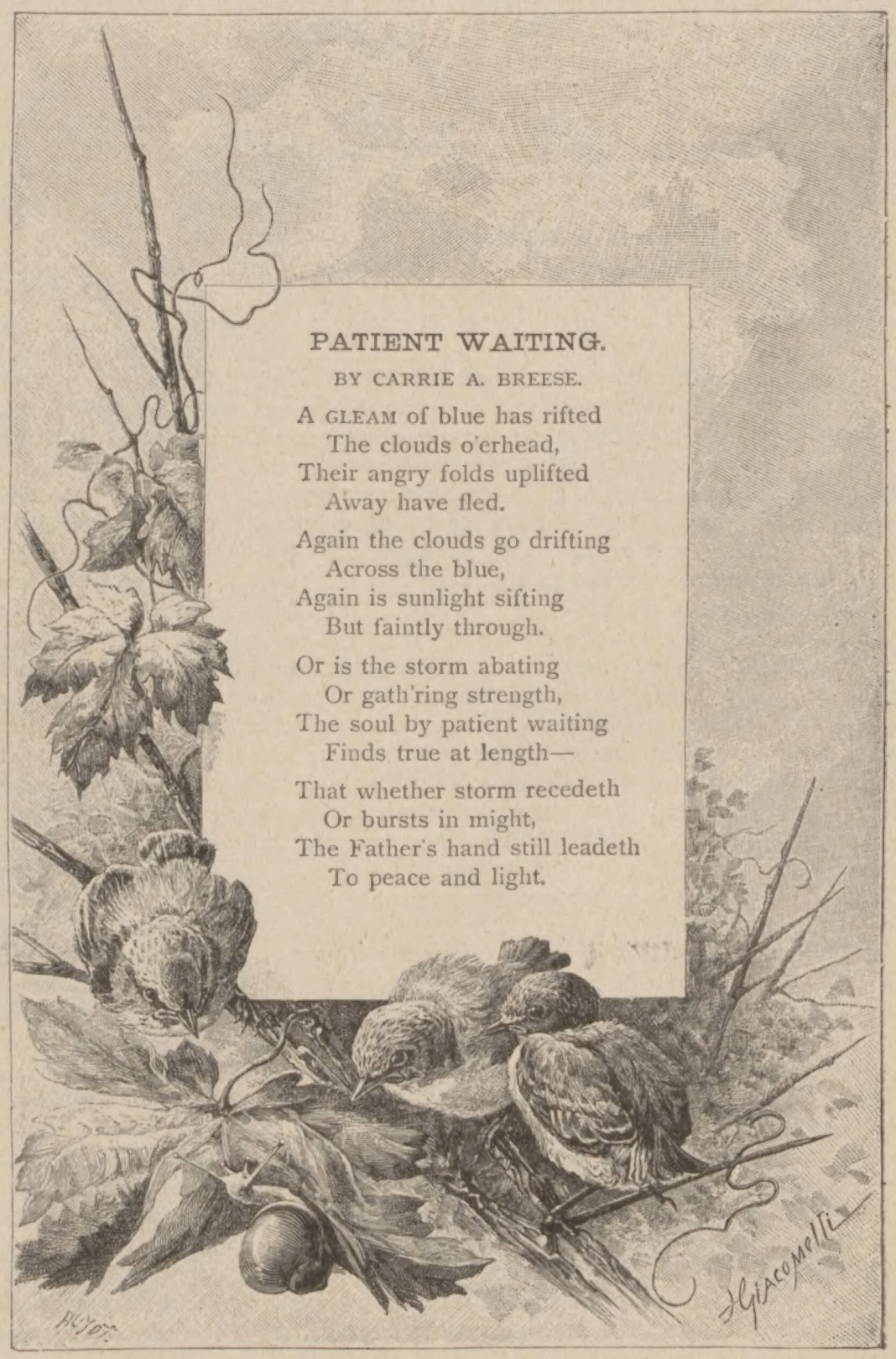
How much the happiness of individual lives is made up of priceless things—not bought by the coin of the land, yet found quickly when the heart of the searcher honestly desires them! Many of these real treasures are qualities that simply diffuse themselves through the moral and mental atmosphere, and are sometimes little valued, but they are genuine possessions, and won by heart service.

What makes home-love dearer and sweeter than all else, and treasured while life lasts? Not the tables and chairs, not the delicacy of porcelain or the æsthetic beauty which the loom achieves. These minister to the comfort, taste, and artistic nature; but beyond these there is something which ministers to the heart and soul, glorifying plain surroundings and homely details—something illusive to measure or weight, yet potent to guide, to comfort, and to help. What is this but the sympathy, the trust, the spirit of sacrifice, the gentleness, the faith, the readiness to do and to bear, which, blended together, make the chain that binds us to our homes?

The power to enjoy with a thankful heart, the power to appreciate—these are what bring truest joy. This thankful receiving of pleasures, great or small, and extracting the honey of enjoyment from them is not to be found at any shop, yet it is the secret of true happiness.

Contentment, too, that balm against the ravages of worldly unrest, where can it be found, and what is its price? Not silver or gold, but patient striving with a thankful heart will bring it to the soul who desires it, and in its possession lurks the charm to chase away unhappy visions, to still unwise longings, and to open the inner vision to the peaceful delights of the home, the friends, the advantages which may be ours. So, too, with true affection—no wealth, no mere worldly possession can ever create or sustain it. And so through all the phases of human happiness we may go, finding always that its true essence is something that must be gained without money or without price.

W. P.



A TALK ABOUT MEMORY TRAINING.

BY LAURA M. LANE.

A LITTLE girl of seven or eight summers sat in a schoolroom with a lesson-book in her hand, while her eyes rested anywhere but on its pages.

Her governess, engaged in giving a French lesson to an elder sister, did not notice the little idler. At last, when the French verb had come to an end, she looked across the room and said—

"Come, Effie, I will hear your poetry now."

Effie rose, crimsoning, and tendered the book hesitatingly to her teacher. The first verse went pretty well. There was a good deal of stumbling over the second, and the third was a dead failure.

The governess sighed as she returned the book.

"You have been sitting there for nearly an hour, Effie, and you do not know this simple lesson yet. Go back and learn it over again."

The child resumed her seat wearily. The afternoon was warm—the bees were humming, the scent of flowers stole into the room, the book slid from the listless hand, and the dreamy eyes roved out of the open window.

"Where was that fat bee going?" she wondered. "Oh, what a lot of honey he was sucking out of that flower! How she would like to go close enough to watch him! Oh, if only papa would get one of those glass hives like Farmer Drummond's, how delightful it would be to watch the bees at work—" The book fell to the ground with a crash!

"Effie," exclaimed the governess, sharply, "if you don't know your lesson by four o'clock, you shall not go to the haymaking party."

This was a terrible threat! It goaded Effie's slack faculties, and stimulated her to fresh endeavour. In less than a quarter of an hour the lesson was correctly repeated.

And now for the moral of this story. What was the child doing during that hour and a half of listless pretence at study? Wasting her time? Ah, no. On the contrary, she was actively using it to the worst possible end. She was sowing the seeds of those indolent, slovenly habits of mind which bear such bitter fruit in after life. The child whose mind wanders aimlessly during the lesson hour is the forerunner of the bad domestic manager who plunges her household into darkness because she has forgotten to order oil and candles, and of the committee member who strikes dismay into the breasts of her colleagues by her inability to "stick to the point."

It is true that our little Effie succeeded in committing the poem to memory; but, at what a cost! Was it worth the ruinous expenditure?

Is the lesson learnt by a young child of as much importance as *the way in which he learns it?*

We think not.

What, then, is the best "way" of learning lessons? We answer, That which develops the memory and increases the power of concentration. The formation of the habit of attention should be the first object of early education.

But how is this habit to be formed? At the mother's knee. Long before "school time" and "regular lessons" have begun, the mother can prepare the ground for the sowing of the seed. It is not necessary to wait till the art of reading is mastered. The mother must be the living book, the sole medium of instruction. Let her begin with some bright, catching verse—a nursery rhyme if you will—and invite the little one to repeat it after her. In order to quicken the habit of attention, she must abstain from going over the same line twice. Should the child fail to grasp the first reading, the lesson or play must be regarded as a failure, and the book closed, to be re-opened on the following day.

The child should be instructed to repeat the preceding lines with each new one. For instance, the mother would begin thus:—

Hickory, dickory, dock.
Child: Hickory, dickory, dock.
Mother: The mouse ran up the clock.
Child: Hickory, dickory, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock.
Mother: The clock struck one, the mouse ran down,
Child: Hickory, dickory, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock,
The clock struck one, the mouse ran down.
Mother: Hickory, dickory, dock.
Child: Hickory, dickory, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock,
The clock struck one, the mouse ran down,
Hickory, dickory, dock.

"How ridiculous!" some zealous educationalists may cry. "The idea of wasting over an absurd nursery rhyme, time which might be devoted to the multiplication table, the dates of the Kings of England, and the divisions of the globe!"

All in good time, dear friends. Tables, and dates, and zones will be learned all the quicker when the habit of concentration is once formed; and this, you must remember, we hold to be the essential aim of early education. Unfortunately, it is not in the nature of little children to take a *vivid interest* in chronology and geography, and the creation of a *vivid interest* is necessary to produce the habit of attention. Until this is formed, and has become, so to speak, second nature, the mother will be obliged to press into the service of education, jingling nursery rhymes and simple, bright little stories. Let her not be discouraged if the first echoes of her teaching are faint and hesitating. The habit of attention is distinctly *unnatural.* The song of a bird, the appearance of a butterfly, the hum of an insect will suffice to divert the child's mind from the lesson. But gradually the power will deepen, the memory will strengthen, and one reading will soon be sufficient to fix in the little head a lesson over which the listless dreamer might expend half an hour, or more. Only those who have tried this system can know with what surprising ease children learn to repeat lessons taught them by word of mouth—the little face fixed eagerly on the mother, the little brain throbbing with the anxious desire to acquit itself well—the whole being interested, alert, wide-awake.

How different from the dog-eared primers and tear-stained multiplication books of other days!

But are not children to be taught to read? Assuredly. But even when the child has learned to read fluently, the oral system of instruction should be carried on till the habit of attention has been formed. The child should only be entrusted with a book, and allowed to con his lessons by himself, at rare intervals, and more as a *test* of progress than from any sense of the superiority of the method. Even then he should be strictly limited to a certain time, and the book taken from his hands at the appointed moment.

But it may be objected that the result of our system savours somewhat of the performance of a clever parrot.

and that the child is not encouraged to make a personal effort. It is certain that memory is not the "alpha and omega" of education. Judgment, discernment, the power of distinguishing between the good and the bad—in a word, the *critical faculty*—are even more necessary than a retentive memory. These powers can be developed at the same time and in an equally simple manner.

In fact, the lesson hours being shortened by the adoption of the oral method of instruction, the child has more time at his disposal for the development of those habits of observation which are natural to him. While very young—as soon as he is able to speak intelligibly—a child should be encouraged to relate some simple fact observed during the day—the opening of a flower, the gambols of the lambs in the meadow, the pale face of a beggar child, the pictures in the shop windows or on a friend's walls. Later, he should be directed to record his impressions in the shape of a daily letter to some member of his family. Writing makes the accurate man, and it is most important that a child should early learn to wield the pen. A little boy who writes in large, round text, "Dear Mamma,—I saw to-day a primrose growing on a bank," has learned two essential points—first, to observe Nature; secondly, to record his observations accurately. If there are several little ones, these letters should be read aloud and the others called on to criticise them, pointing out the good as well as the bad points of each infantine composition. For it must never be forgotten that the highest form of criticism springs from admiration.

A child who has been taught on the above system, whose memory and whose powers of concentration have been strengthened and developed by oral instruction, and who has early learned both to observe and to reduce his observation to writing, may know less of grammar, geography, and arithmetic than many children of his age; nevertheless, he has laid the basis of all future excellence, and every "airy scaffolding" of art can find a footing on this firm foundation.

A SYMPATHETIC CHILD.

I THINK we are all too prone to ignore the deeper feelings, and even virtues, often latent in the child mind. We are ever very apt to forget the beautiful lesson taught by the Great Teacher, who certainly propounded a wondrous truth when, setting a little child in the midst of His inquiring audience, He declared that unless His older and would-be wiser hearers possessed its spirit, they should not enter into the kingdom of heaven. It will be frequently found by those who closely observe children and their ways, how spontaneous is their goodness, and how almost intuitive is their eager sympathy—traits of character which may compare favourably with those of their elders. An illustration of this occurs to me now, which I will relate.

Maggie was a little girl about seven years of age, of whom I had charge. Her home was a pretty country rectory, and her parents made much of her, for she was the only girl; but, though much indulged, her loving little heart kept her from being very much hurt by it.

One cold, bright Sunday in early spring, as we left the church, Maggie asked me to let her go home by way of what was known as Gipsy Lane, because she wanted to see whether there were any gipsies there.

"I think I can see a little smoke; do please let me, Miss Leslie," she pleaded.

"You may if you like, dear," I answered; "but we must make haste, for you know it takes longer to go round by that way."

"Oh! that's nice, I like making haste," and off she ran down the lane, returning in a minute or two, however; and slipping her tiny hand in mine, we walked on, my little companion doing most of the talking.

"Miss Leslie," she said, presently, "I do so long to find a violet! You said perhaps I might; but I have not found one."

"The wind has been so cold lately, dear," I said, "the poor little violets are afraid to peep out. When they come, what will you do with the first you find?"

"I would give half to you to carry, and then we would give them all to poor mother," was the answer. "She cannot gather them, and she is so fond of them."

Before I could reply further, something caught my eye, and so quickly did Maggie follow my glance, that we cried out together, "A violet!" and my pet sprang forward like a little fawn, and, amid many exclamations of delight, gathered three beautiful purple violets.

"Oh, Miss Leslie!" she cried, "is it not a *lovely* surprise? I will gather three leaves to make more, and then I will divide them."

A puzzled little look came over her face as she said this. Presently the division was made, and she offered me, as my share, two violets and one leaf; but I said, "No, darling, I should like you to carry them all; we will not divide them."

"You *are* good, Miss Leslie!" she said, and then, looking at the flowers, she exclaimed, "Oh, you dear, *dear* little sweeties! How mamma will like them!"

"Come along, now, dear," I said, and we went quickly on.

At the top of the hill the road turned rather sharply to the left, leaving a three-cornered piece of grass land, and on this exposed corner (for the hedges were low) a gipsy family was encamped.

Two miserable horses were feeding a little way down the road; a rough man was leaning against the caravan, his hands deep in his pockets, a short pipe in his mouth; the mother was washing clothes (some of which were drying on the low hedges), and two or three children were playing about; but no one took any notice of a poor little fellow of about three years of age, who stood crying on the edge of the grass. It was such a miserable cry, it made my heart ache; and much I wished I had something which would please him for a moment—a biscuit, a few sweets, or a little picture; for, of course, money meant nothing to him, nor would *he* have benefited by it.

Suddenly Maggie's little hand was drawn out of mine, and the next moment the crying ceased, surprise and joy gleaming from those baby eyes. My little darling had given him her precious violets!

It is several years since this little incident of child-love and sympathy occurred, but it has vividly remained with me, suggesting many a heart lesson. Often has it controlled temper when dealing with fractious children, and kept me alive to the sacredness and purity of unspoiled childhood. May every mother seek to develop each noble quality inherent in her Divine charges!

E. J.

ODDS AND ENDS.

I USED to wonder in the days gone by, when my knowledge of the world was confined to the ordinary experiences of an uneventful girlhood, from whence came all the odds and ends displayed by itinerant vendors at fairs, cattle markets, and on Saturday evenings in provincial towns.

I was also troubled with a kindred thought as to where the great majority of them went to, for assuredly it seemed incredible that such things as the tops of candlesticks without the bottoms, and bottoms without the tops, broken handsaws, rusty screens, battered musical instruments, odd boots, and a hundred other cast-off things could find purchasers.

But as there are regular times and seasons, and well-known places for the sale of odds and ends, vended by people who apparently pursue no other occupation, only one conclusion could be come to by a thinking mind. Somebody wants these derelicts of the higher social life, and somebody buys them.

One of the few amusements of my busy life is attending sales, sometimes to buy anything in the way of china or pictures I think is going particularly cheap, but more often simply to look on. Candid friends have told me I have a mania in this direction, and I have been asked if I do not profitlessly spend much valuable time in this "fad," as they are pleased to call it. The answers I give are generally vague, for I feel that I am justified in doing what I please with my time, provided I do not waste it, nor utilise it to the injury of my fellow-creatures.

As a matter of fact, an auction room is one of the best fields of life for the student of human nature to cultivate, and volumes might be written on the men and women one meets there. But it is not my intention now to inflict upon the reader the experiences of twenty odd years, but to confine myself to the problem that presented itself in my teens, which was first solved at a sale near my home.

Everybody who knows anything about auctions knows that the last lots of a sale of "household furniture and effects" are mainly collections of heterogeneous things—saucepans without handles, hairless house brushes, worn mats that are pitfalls for unwary feet, odd cups and saucers, battered tin ware; in short, the wreckage of the home leavened by some sound and useful articles ingeniously placed on the top of the box or basket containing the particular lot.

It was at the sale I have referred to that I first saw an elderly woman, who, without betraying any marked anxiety to become a purchaser, secured half-a-dozen of these "tails of the catalogue," as they are called, in many cases at a nominal cost. I was afterwards told that she was the wife of a well-to-do furniture dealer, and that her branch of the thriving business was dealing in "cast-off" of every description.

I have been in her company many times since, and, with the charming freedom of the auction room, which does much to level social distinctions, we have struck up an acquaintance. On meeting before a sale we now exchange the customary salutations of friends, and it not infrequently happens that at the end of it we compare notes as to the value of our respective bargains.

The shrewdness of this worthy woman is amazing. She knows the market value of every lot put up, no flaw in anything escapes her keen grey eyes, and I should be the most ungrateful of women if I did not honestly admit that her advice has been at times invaluable to me. Nay, more, she has made her husband a friend of mine, and on more than one occasion, when a lot of china or a variety of pictures has been sent up, of which we each wanted a part but not the whole, we have abstained from bidding against each other, and after the sale divided the spoil.

From this worthy couple I ascertained the following facts concerning the odds and ends which constitute the last lot in the catalogue list. They take home the "rubbish" they buy, sort out the few saleable articles, and again divide the rest into lots, which are in turn purchased by the vendors who attend the markets and fairs. These latter-named dealers cannot give their time to attend the sale, unless it is near their home; but they know when one has taken place, and to whom to go for the class of thing they require. A "deal" is soon effected, and the "odds and ends" man or woman hies away with his or her purchases to re-sort and, in due time, display them to the best advantage before the poorer classes of the community.

Nearly every second-hand article—no matter what it may be—in due time finds a purchaser. "You see," said my informant, "when people have little or nothing to live on it sets one thinking and makes one ingenious. It would astonish you to see how they will repair and piece together this rubbish so as to make everything useful. Bless you, there are thousands of homes where nothing new, from clothes to a tea-cup, is ever seen."

Here, then, is the true solution of the curious collection of wares displayed at our markets, fairs, or any place where the poor assemble to buy. Our illustration is a faithful rendering of the Metropolitan Cattle Market on Friday, the day set apart for this peculiar business. Of course, *all* the repairing is not left to the purchaser. The vendors are generally handy men and women, with a talent for polishing up and making things fit that were never intended by the original maker to come together. The handle of a coffee-pot is fixed to one intended for tea. Earthenware is ingeniously repaired with cement, or riveted if it is fairly good. Almost hairless brushes are treated as a woman treats her "crowning glory" when it is getting thin. Artifice is resorted to, and the most is made of what is left. Leaking cans, saucepans and kettles are stopped with solder, and if anything is left untouched it is because it is beyond the repairing gifts of the vendor and must be left to the more ingenious purchaser, or the price this article is likely to fetch will not pay for the requisite labour.

It is a strange world, and we need not go to savage life for "curiosities." A visit to the Metropolitan Cattle Market any Friday when it is fine will amply repay the most ardent student of things not generally seen—at all events, among the classes who have never felt the chill grip of penury, and who, thanks to their good fortune, have yet to learn the full value of a shilling.

E. H. B.

Friday at the Metropolitan Cattle Market. (*Drawn by* CHARLES GREEN, R.I.)

"THE RIGHT KIND OF A GIRL."

BY HELEN A. BUTLER.

I HAVE spent a pleasant day, and it was the culmination of such an interesting experience that I must tell you about it.

It is just two years ago that I went into niece Mary's one morning on my way to town. I was astonished to find her in tears, and both children looking ready to join her. I created a diversion by taking baby Bell on my lap and handing over my hand-bag to Rob, who at once set to work to discover the mystery of the spring fastening, just as I knew he would.

"Now, Mary, do tell me what is the matter," I said.

"Oh, Aunt Isabel!" she replied, wiping off the tears, "I do wish I could get a maid who wouldn't pilfer. I have just been obliged to dismiss Susan, and I dread another girl; but I must have help with the children." And she went on to tell me of her trials with dishonest Susan.

I didn't say a word while Mary was telling her story. It seemed very sad and very trying, for this was a good home for the right kind of a girl, and I felt a great desire to see the two things fitted; but who could tell how such a desirable union could be brought about?

By this time baby had become tired of jingling my watch-chain, and so after warmly expressing my sympathy with Mary, I hailed a passing car and went on my way.

I was late that day in getting through my shopping, and decided to take the train home. At last I found myself entering the railway carriage, quite tired out. But I had scarcely done so, when directly behind me came a poorly dressed and plain but very intelligent faced girl, who quietly took a seat in the corner. Immediately she was settled two ladies and a child came in and seated themselves just beyond the girl.

I thought I heard something drop as they passed along, and noticed the plain girl bend over and look down on the floor. She saw what my old eyes failed to discover, and quickly bending forward she picked up a ring, which glistened beautifully as she held it up.

This was one of my looking and listening times, so I lost nothing of the next moment's events.

The girl sat up, and turning to the ladies who had just entered, said quietly—I noticed then how distinct and lady-like her tones were—"Didn't you drop your ring, madam?"

"No, I think not," said the one addressed, glancing carelessly at her hand. "Why, yes, I did!" she said quickly—"one with a handsome stone, an amethyst. Yes, indeed, that is it," she added, as the girl placed the ring in her hand. "I thank you very much. It was very careless of me to wear it when I knew it was too loose."

The girl nodded and sat back in her seat. Just as she did so one of two girls sitting opposite me and her whispered distinctly, "What a fool that girl was! Why didn't she keep the ring?"

It did my old heart good to see the plain face aglow with honest indignation, for she also had heard the words, as she said with simple dignity, "The ring did not belong to me."

All at once I seemed to be holding two threads, which perhaps it was my business to join; but what I intended to do must be done quickly. I quietly changed my seat for one beside the plain girl, and said, "I noticed the little episode just now. Would you mind telling me your name?"

Perhaps my elderly face gave her confidence, for though she looked surprised, she frankly gave her name as Rachel Mannering.

During the ten minutes which the train took in reaching my destination I learnt that she worked at finishing-off clothing in a large warehouse in the city, but ceased work earlier on Saturdays, when she went home to spend the Sundays with her mother. I found out where that home was, and that the mother did fine sewing.

After I had taken my tea late that afternoon I sent a note to niece Mary not to engage another maid until she had heard from me.

Monday morning found me ringing at Mrs. Mannering's door, with a bundle of articles to be hemmed and marked.

The outcome of my call was that the mother would be more than glad for her daughter to find a situation in a good home. In fact, they had been seeking one, as Rachel's eyes were not strong. There was a sickly little brother, and the family funds were evidently low.

A call on Rachel herself resulted in her being, at the end of the week, installed as the new girl in niece Mary's comfortable home. It was a home in the truest sense, and Rachel fitted it admirably.

I made occasion to call frequently at the Mannerings' little cottage—I liked the intelligent mother, and could often supply her with work. She was increasingly grateful for Rachel's good fortune, and inclined to ascribe it all to me.

One day while speaking on the subject of her daughter's happy change, I said the whole affair was due to the ring, or rather to her daughter's sense of honour in regard to it.

"Yes," said Mrs. Mannering, "I never hear of an amethyst ring without recalling the day of my leaving my old school at Winterton. A rich aunt of my special friend, Dora Neal, had sent her a beautiful ring of that kind, and as we stood with arms entwined after the fashion of girls, Dora said lovingly, 'This is one thing I cannot divide with you, Ray; but never mind, I shall bequeath it to your daughter.' Generous Dora! time and circumstances have so separated us that I do not even know if she is now living."

Well, the months went on, and each one seemed to prove more clearly how well Rachel was adapted to the place she filled. I grant that she had an exceptional employer. For instance, not many ladies ever think of laying aside their various periodicals, after they have finished with them, for the use of their servants.

And now I come back to where I started this curious story. There was a quiet little wedding this morning. Rachel was married to David Drew, a manly young carpenter, whom we have known a year or more.

It all came about naturally enough, when one thinks of it. One morning Rachel was hanging out the baby's washing, when the line broke, with imminent danger of letting all the dainty garments down into the dirt. The young man was working in the house at the time, and seeing Rachel's dilemma, hastened to her help.

Next day, Rob had the croup, and Mary told Rachel to ask the young carpenter to go for the doctor.

We all know that there is nothing like being in trouble of one kind or another to make people understand each other; and the acquaintance thus begun between the young folks went naturally on, until it ripened into love.

The marriage is a desirable one in every way. We are heartily glad for Rachel and her family. She had some fine

and well-chosen presents, for she has made many friends. Among the gifts was a handsome amethyst ring, the very one that Rachel picked up in the train two years ago!

The owner proved to be a friendly acquaintance of niece Mary. One day Rachel happened to enter the room while Mrs. Lansing was paying a visit, and of course there was a mutual recognition.

Mrs. Lansing remarked after Rachel had left the room, "How much that girl resembles an old school friend of mine, one that I loved very dearly! I heard that she married a Manning or Mannering, but have never been able to find a clue to her existence since, though I have tried to do so."

It took but a few sentences to establish the identity of Rachel's mother with Mrs. Lansing's friend, and I recently had the exquisite pleasure of witnessing the reunion of these two dear old friends.

You may be sure that Mrs. Lansing was only too happy to be able to fulfil her old promise; and so the amethyst ring, in a modern and handsome setting, was a conspicuous article among our plain girl's wedding gifts.

OUR HOME LAUNDRY.

BY AN AMATEUR LAUNDRESS.

III.—How to Take Out Stains.

"TOMMY spilt a cup of tea over our best table-cloth the other morning. Helen jumped up in her energetic way, and began—

"Put a cup under the stain at once while it is wet. Now, Annie, hand up that kettle. Strain the cloth and let me pour through."

"But, Helen, won't the wet spread and spoil the cloth?" I ventured to inquire.

"No, my dear. If you *soaked* in hot water, the cloth would drink up any amount. Pouring through has no such effect."

Then Helen pointed out how magically the tea stain was running through with the boiling water, and in a moment had quite disappeared.

"There is no need *ever* to have our table-cloths disfigured with brown marks," said Vera. "Only we must not let them get dry. Above all, soap must never be allowed near any stain, or it becomes permanently fixed."

"In shorter language, a fast dye?" I queried meekly. Vera always *will* use such long words!

We all laughed a bit, and became most neighbourly over our discussion.

"Coffee, as well as tea stains are easily removed by the same method," explained Helen. "We will just get a heater and press the damp spot when dry, and no one will guess we have been so unfortunate."

It had always been a grief to my economical mind to see a clean cloth banished on account of a small accident. Now we never dream of rolling up our damask and putting it away (to contract fresh stain and mildew) until it has had its full share of usage. Sometimes, of course, a visitor may be with us and we are not able to repair mischief at once. Then it becomes a little more difficult to get out the stain. However, a pinch of borax is on such occasions dissolved in the boiling liquid and poured through first. The most obstinate of coffee dyes will yield to such treatment.

We are all fond of raspberry and strawberry stews, of fruit syrups and juices, etc. Accidents often happen with the shallow glass dishes we indulge in.

Now, we have found by experience that the red purply marks left by fruit of all sorts can be easily taken out by a very simple method. A pinch of salt is first well rubbed in while still at the table. (*Promptness* of action is the great secret in dealing with stains.) Then, immediately after the meal, the spot is manipulated in the manner described above.

One day Helen ventured to dabble with oxalic acid on a more than usually obstinate spot. Our "Lotus pattern" might as well have been trusted to Mrs. Jones. The stain was certainly removed. So was that portion of the cloth!

Father is an old man and has some peculiarities. Amongst them is a fancy for writing notes on our very best silk-faced Irish linen. "Slinging ink" is a meritorious pursuit under certain circumstances. It is a reprehensible feat when performed over a table-cloth. We used to fret dreadfully over the iron-mould that marked his Reverence's path. Now we do not mind so much. We always have salt and half a lemon at hand. We rub in the first with an application of the latter, pour water through, and—exit ink!

With our *coloured* cloth on the drawing-room table, if spotted by our dear short-sighted parent, we do not lose a moment. If once dried, it will require stronger methods than the dye will stand. We take *warm* boiled milk or butter-milk. It must not be boiling, only warm. In this we rub the ink stain lightly with the tips of our fingers. As the milk becomes inky it must be changed (several times if necessary). Persevere with this treatment till the black spot fades away. It will do so very gradually. Rinse in warm clean water at the last, and smooth with not too hot an iron. If the ink has been allowed to dry on a white material, or has been turned into iron-mould per Mrs. Jones or neglect, we spread the part to be operated on over a shallow vessel half full of boiling water, then we slightly moisten its surface, and lay thereon a tiny pinch of salts of lemon. I always admire the caution with which Helen acts in this matter. With the tips of her slim white fingers she uses just enough of the acid—not allowing one grain to rest on the surrounding threads. After a rest of a few minutes a thin stream of boiling water is directed on each spot. Most carefully this is done, as, if the salts of lemon spread to the whole parts of the linen, they quickly burn and rot it.

It is a constantly recurring wonder to see how the iron-mould disappears. Conjurers' tricks are nothing to this sleight of hand!

N.B.—It is well for mothers to remember that salts of lemon is a *strong* poison. It should be kept away from reach and duly ticketed as dangerous.

I had thought this was the last hint I could give the readers of our MOTHERS' COMPANION about stains and their cure. Vera just reminds me that I have not spoken about the most common of all—*i.e.*, *scorching*.

Well, dear friends, the remedy is so easy a one that I thought it scarcely worth while to mention it.

Simply take your scorched linen, lace, or silk and rub it gently (after soaking a few minutes) in *cold* water. If done at once this process is always successful.

THE MASTER'S MESSAGES TO WOMEN.

BY MRS. CHARLOTTE SKINNER.

IV.—To the Woman Wishing to be Rich.

"Give me."—John iv. 7.

EVERYBODY likes the idea of being rich. This poor, weary woman standing by the well thought it would be just delightful to be so rich as never to need to come again for water. But we generally make the fatal mistake of supposing money makes a woman rich. The poorest women often have large, fixed incomes. Here is a test of what earthly gold is worth. Suppose you are hungry for love, and you offer a woman, rich in love, a cheque for a hundred pounds, saying, "Love me!" Could you be sure of getting it? *Never.* You meet a sunny-faced woman; offer her the same amount, saying, "Give me of your brightness!" and she will answer, "Money cannot purchase it." The richest women are mostly the poorest in this world's wealth. Yet to be really rich we must *get* something. A truly rich woman has *three* watch-words—*Get, Give, Gather.* You will see the force of the first from our message, "*Give me.*" The Master never asks for what we have not. The woman by the well had the rope, the skin bucket, the water-pot, and low down in its cool retreat lay the wonderful water. All there—only *will* and action needed.

Get.

What? "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold that thou mayest be rich." The buying is not with money. "Come buy, without money and without price." "But what shall I pay?" do you ask? *Faith* is the coin, *assurance* the gold. "Hath not God chosen the poor, *rich in faith?*" "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich."

Give.

If we only get we shall always be poor. We shall always be poor if we think only of the duty of giving, and not of the blessedness. Now, what would the Master like us to give?

Money. Every Jew had to pay so much to God, and you remember the beautiful story of the widow whom the Master watched as she put her two mites into the offering box, and what praise she got. In the Old Testament we read of people who gave fields, and parts of fields, to the Lord. We suppose they had either not so much money to give as they would like, and so made up by money's worth, or they liked to think of attending to what was the Lord's, and watching the Lord's wheat growing.

A poor crippled woman cultivated a little piece of ground with potatoes. She determined one day she would give a halfpenny every week to the Master's work. The Lord prospered her little crop, and next year she gave twopence per week, and the Lord prospered her more abundantly. At the end of the first year her property was about ten pounds, and at the end of the next fifteen pounds. She now resolved to give a penny a day. Thus she went on, and the Lord prospered her, till she was able to give sixpence. When she now took stock in her little way, she found she had thirty to forty pounds. Then she gave one shilling and threepence per day. That was years ago, and now she is in possession of several hundred pounds.

But we must never give because the Master gives in return.

Yourselves. The gift without the giver would not be valued by the Lord. Moses said once to the children of Israel, "Consecrate *yourselves* to the Lord;" and in the days of brave Mother Deborah, we read that the people *willingly* gave themselves to the Lord.

Obedience. "Now are ye My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," were our dear Master's words, so we can be quite sure that is a gift He would like. Obedience is a test of love. How many lessons we may learn from our little ones! I went into a house a few days ago, and when the mother entered the room she was followed by two little boys. On asking them to go back to the kitchen, they replied, "I shan't," "I don't want to." At last they had to be ejected from the room by physical force. The same day came a story of a little boy playing in the street, and when he felt it coming on to rain, he said to his companion, "Oh, I must go in now; mother said I was not to stay out if it began to rain." "Catch me going in," was the other boy's remark, "till I think I shall; you would be a silly to go in 'cause your mother told you to." But he got a splendid answer—"I shall go in, then! I wouldn't make my mother sad through my listening to you, and doing what you say!"

Work. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit," are some of the Master's words. Many of us have very little money, and little that is worth money, but we can all give work. And the worth of lowly deeds none can fully reckon. "I was holding a mission in a colliery district," a minister related at a prayer meeting, "and in the course of the morning when I was inviting people to the evening meeting, I knocked at a door and found a woman at the washing tub. I said to her, 'I called to tell you I am holding mission services; will you and your family join us?' 'No,' said she, 'I'm up to my eyes in washing, I've three black men coming in, and there's that wringing machine—I gave fifty shillings for it, and it's broken the first round.' She was in a towering passion, and I thought I would not say any more; but I took a look at the machine and found it was not broken, it had only slipped out of its gear; so I unscrewed it altogether, set it right, and then said, 'Now you've been hindered so, I'll just take a turn at the wringing.' So I went to work, turn, turn, turn. At last she looked up and said, 'Where did you say the meeting was?' I told her. She said, 'I'll tell my husband to-night, and will come.' That woman got blessed and all her family; she turned out to be the best worker in the village, and there was a grand work for God in that place. She went from house to house, saying, 'Come and hear the minister, it's he as mended the machine.'" Now, what that minister did, we women could do.

Now. "Why, that is not a gift," I think you are saying. No, it is not exactly, but it is this which adds value to all the others. If you were very hungry and were promised food in a fortnight's time, that would not give you any present happiness, and probably when it did come it would be of no value at all. Christ wants us to give Him gifts *now*, and in so doing they increase in value to Him. In ever so many places in the Bible this is urged upon us.

Please place these words before you: *Money, Yourself, Obedience, Work, Now.* The first letters of each form the words, "My Own," and when Christ asks for these

things He is but asking for His own, for all we have are His.

When I was a wee child, mother gave me sixpence each week, out of which, at certain periods, a contribution had to be paid towards the purchase of new clothes; not that it went far towards the necessary attire, but there was a principle in the arrangement. One year when mother's birthday was drawing near, a few pennies were saved out of the private portion, and wools and canvas bought. A piece of black silk was begged, and then after some secret hours of work, a wonderful little bag, with wonderful rosebuds, was produced, and in due time presented to mother. Do you suppose she said, "Well, the money you bought the materials with was mine, and the silk was mine; your time was mine, because you belong to me, and therefore I need not thank you"? Oh dear, no; nothing of the sort. She was just delighted, and gave unlimited praise and thanks.

Jesus and the Woman at the Well.

So all we have is the Master's, but still He asks us for our gifts, and loves those who, out of a free heart, cheer-

fully and promptly respond to His message, "*Give Me.*"

GATHER.

The giving is not all on one side. We lift up our hands to heaven and say, "Give me;" then with both hands we scatter, saying, "Take;" and then again with both hands we gather to ourselves, while a sweet voice whispers, "*Receive.*"

Many Christian women *get* and *give*, but do not *gather*. To *gather* means "taking in," "collecting," "claiming for our own." Hence, there are so many poor women who yet are followers of the Master, and daily listening for His messages.

Things to gather. "To give the oil of *joy*," Isa. lxi. 3; "My *peace* I give unto you," John xiv. 27; "*A crown of righteousness*, which the Lord shall give me," 2 Tim. iv. 8; "God who hath also given unto us *His Holy Spirit*," 1 Thess. iv. 8; "God hath given to us *eternal life*," 1 John v. 11.

Count them up—1. Joy; 2. Peace; 3. Future Reward; 4. Holy Spirit; 5. Eternal Life. These are all ours for the gathering, and they do not exhaust the list. "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure."

Who, then, can say we may not, all of us, be

RICH WOMEN?

PRACTICAL PAPERS ON EVERYDAY NURSING.

BY E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," "ABOUT OUR FOOD," ETC.

VII.—More Serious Ills.

WE have spoken about the every-day ailments, which begin and end for the most part in a few days. Now we come to consider the graver illnesses which caused me to choose the title of my series.

It is almost as necessary for a mother to know the symptoms of a disease, as it is for her to understand the treatment of it. Many a life has been lost because the symptoms were misunderstood, or ignored; a little treatment of the wrong sort was resorted to, and the doctor was called in too late. So I want, so far as I can honestly do it, to tell you a few of the symptoms of ordinary diseases, that you may be armed ready to fight the enemy when first he appears.

Let us begin with a very common but most troublesome one, WHOOPING COUGH. The child has an ordinary cold and cough, and you treat him for such; but after a few days or a fortnight, instead of disappearing, it becomes more violent, especially at night. It comes in spasms or paroxysms, the poor little chap coughing till he is quite tired, and then going back to his games as if he had not been interrupted. That means whooping cough, even if you don't hear him whoop. If you have a clinical thermometer you can manage without a doctor for a time. Clothe the child warmly, and keep a flannel bandage round his chest and back, having one for use at night and one for day. You will find they get soaked through with perspiration, and must be well dried and aired before they are put on again.

Rub the chest and back well with Roach's embrocation night and morning, before you put on the bandage. If the paroxysms are very bad at night, keep a bronchitis kettle going, with a teaspoonful of Friar's Balsam to every pint of water. Feed the child carefully with plenty of nourishing things—milk, beef-tea, new-laid eggs—but avoid much solid food, and all stimulants. Let him live in the fresh air if possible. Take the temperature night and morning, and keep an account of the paroxysms, whether they are longer or more violent, etc. If the temperature goes up, then you must send for a doctor at once.

Whooping cough is a disease which requires plenty of patience. In spite of all the quack medicines, there is no cure for it—all you can do is to keep up the child's strength, so that the disease may do him as little harm as possible; but run its course it will, in spite of the whole College of Physicians. A pretty long course it is, too—from six to twelve weeks at the least.

CHICKEN-POX is a less troublesome enemy. The symptoms are a little fever and a generally uncomfortable feeling, such as the famous country bumpkin described as "sort o' kind of all-over-a-like-ish."

In two or three days rose-coloured separate pimples appear all over the body, but chiefly on the back and chest. They gradually change into transparent vesicles filled with water.

Let the patient be kept by himself in a room well ventilated, and at a temperature of from sixty-five to seventy; feed him on milk, gruel, and broth, and in about a fortnight he will be all right again.

MEASLES and SCARLET FEVER are so often mistaken by amateur nurses in the early stage, that I think it will be best to speak to you of these both side by side, so that when some case of eruption appears in your family you can just turn over the pages of this magazine and find out what it is. A case of simple measles you can in all probability nurse without a doctor, but if it is scarlet fever, or if you are not quite sure what it is, send for him at once.

First for the rash of measles. It is *dark red;* it shows itself on the *fourth* day after the patient begins to feel ill; it is *raised*, so that you can feel it with your fingers if you shut your eyes. I don't mean that you can't feel it when your eyes are open, but somehow I fancy when one *looks* at a thing one cannot judge so well of the *feel* of it.

The eruption is *large* and *crescent-shaped* and *does not disappear* when pressed by the fingers.

Now, the rash of scarlet fever is almost exactly opposite to all this. It appears on the *second* day, is bright scarlet, and is perfectly smooth to the touch, so that you *cannot* feel it with your eyes shut. It is small and round, and it does disappear when you press it.

There is a common saying about the measles rash which, if you can store it up in your memory, may save you from mistakes—"Three days out and four days in."

Now we must divide the diseases, and follow the course of each. An almost unfailing symptom of measles is a violent cold in the head, with tendency to croupy cough. The temperature rises to between a hundred and one and a hundred and two, and the rash appears, as I have said, on the fourth day, showing first on face, eyes, and forehead.

The treatment is, simple foods without solids, cool water to drink, and a darkened room with plenty of fresh air; and if all goes well your patient will recover in about a fort-

night or three weeks. Only remember he must be kept in bed as long as the fever lasts.

There are, however, certain dangers to be looked out for in the simplest case of measles, unless the greatest care is taken to avoid sudden chills; pneumonia and bronchitis being constantly brought about by want of proper caution.

The first symptoms of scarlet fever are generally slight feverishness, redness of throat, and difficulty of swallowing. On the second day the rash begins to appear on neck and chest, then spreads all over the body, keeping its deepest colour always on the neck, and outer side of limbs and joints.

The doctor must be sent for, and you must follow his directions carefully.

In this and all other infectious diseases, you must isolate the patient and the nurse. The top floor of the house is the best for you, if you can choose. Strip the room of every single thing that is not absolutely necessary. Open the window at the top, and put a fire or a lamp in the stove to ventilate it according to the weather. See that the staircase and landing are continually ventilated; hang a sheet over the outside of your door, saturated with carbolic acid—one teaspoonful for forty of water; then having put that same carbolic acid bottle where you cannot possibly take it up in mistake for another, and having done all that is in your power to prevent the disease spreading, commend your patient and yourself to the care of God and work away.

Scrub the floor frequently if you can, but anyway wipe it over daily with some disinfectant, and also the furniture. Newspapers, books, toys, once brought into the sick-room should, as Dr. Herbert Mosse says in writing on the subject of infectious diseases, "never leave the room except by the chimney, *i.e.*, they must be burnt."

Place your own chair and that for the doctor between the *door* and the *chimney*, and be careful that you do not stand or sit between the bed and the chimney. You see, as there is a direct current of air in every room from the door to the chimney, the air infected by him comes straight upon you. This seems a trivial matter, but you have no more right to run *into* danger than you have to run *from* it, if your duty lies there.

Your dress must be short and washable when nursing infectious cases, you must change it, and wash yourself with disinfectants before passing through the other part of the house to get a walk, and you must hang your dress up in an airy place till you return, putting it on again before you enter the sick-room.

All that the patient wears must be disinfected before it is sent to the wash, being wrung out in the above mentioned solution of carbolic and hung out of doors for hours.

DISINFECTANTS.—One word as to these. Don't run into the common mistake and substitute a pleasant smell for a nasty one, and imagine you have disinfected the place. Perfumes, pastilles, burnt coffee, and such-like things may be pleasant as scents, but as disinfectants they are worthless. Here are the three best purifiers you can use, only the first is very objectionable to some people, although it is one of the very best.

Chloride of lime may be placed on a plate. Sprinkle a little vinegar over it if you want it to act quickly. A little put in the water when washing the room, makes it smell very refreshing.

Condy's Fluid may be placed in a saucer or other open vessel. Change it directly its colour alters to brown. A weak solution of this makes a first-rate gargle, and a pleasant wash for the mouth.

Sanitas is an admirable disinfectant. If you have a spray or scent diffuser, you can squirt it all over the place, even inside the bed, without doing any harm, and you will find the effect most refreshing as well as purifying.

The dangers of scarlet fever are dropsy, malignant sore throat, kidney disease, pleurisy, and general weakness of the lungs. Special care is needed when the peeling process begins, on the patient's account lest he should get a chill, and on the other people's account lest the particles of skin, being carried in the air, should be the means of spreading the disease.

BED SORES.—Closely allied to scarlet fever is diphtheria, but I must put that off till next month, and in the space still left to me let me give you a word of caution about all long illnesses. Be on your guard against bed sores. I want you to prevent them, for they are a very torture to the patient, who has already enough misery to bear, and, as a rule, they can be prevented if you begin early enough.

Miss Nightingale says that where there is any tendency to them, it is better not to have a blanket under the cotton sheet, as it "retains damp and acts like a poultice."

Look carefully for the slightest redness on the parts where the pressure generally is—the thighs, the knees, the ankles—and sponge twice daily with eau-de-cologne; then dust them over with plain starch powder, or with zinc oxide and starch.

In consumption and other wasting diseases, great comfort is sometimes given by having tiny cushions made of pieces of linen stuffed with linen threads, put between the limbs to prevent their touching each other. I have known cases where the bed clothes, however light, were all too heavy for the poor sufferer. They can easily be raised by a contrivance of stools on either side of the patient if a proper cradle cannot be had.

If it should be your fate to nurse one of these hopeless, heartrending diseases, don't leave out one little trifle that may add to the sufferer's comfort or ease his pain. You will be so thankful, when all is over, not to have to reproach yourself with having left anything undone that might have given him a moment's pleasure.

Hints for Busy Housewives.

GILT FRAMES.—To restore gilt frames, rub them with a sponge moistened in turpentine.

Cleaning Glass.—Glass vessels can be washed and polished without half the labour that is usually bestowed on them if salt and vinegar are poured in and well shaken, and afterwards carefully rinsed.

Untainted Salt.—It is just as necessary to keep salt from absorbing bad odours as to cover over cream and similar articles. A bag of best salt standing where there is a smell of fish or any objectionable odour is liable to become tainted.

Sweetening.—Chemists say it takes more than twice as much sugar to sweeten preserves, sauce, etc., if it is put in before cooking, as it does to sweeten after the fruit is cooked.

Hoarseness.—When hoarse, speak as little as possible until the hoarseness has disappeared, else the voice may be permanently lost, or difficulties with the throat be produced.

Nice Cream Cake.—One cup of butter, one cup of cream, three cups of sugar, four cups of flour, five eggs, one teaspoonful of soda or three of baking powder, and the grated rind of a fresh lemon or any flavouring preferred.

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

MANY of our readers will be looking forward to a holiday at the seaside or in the country towards the close of this month, when the children's long holiday from school commences, and in consequence will be making some preparations. Undoubtedly, cotton dresses for the girls and blouses for the little boys are the most economical in wear, especially as dark colours can now be bought. The younger boys might have knickers of serge, which can be worn either with a sailor blouse to match, or with a blouse made of drill; and for the older boys a tennis jacket, which can easily be made at home. A change of dress can be effected for the older girls by making one or two blouse bodices, either white or coloured. Muslin embroidery flouncing makes very pretty dresses for girls up to the age of ten or twelve years. This flouncing is generally about forty inches wide, so that a piece sufficient for the yoke and a shoulder frill can be taken from the length, and a piece of plain muslin to match for the sleeves is all else necessary for the dress. The dress should be from two to three yards wide, according to the length required.

Fig. 25.

Fig. 25. Here we show a blouse bodice which will answer either for the older girls or mamma. It is made of a spotted crepon or delaine, and has a fitting lining which reaches as far as the waist. In the front the material is gathered into the neck, and laid in close pleats at the waist; on either side of this full front a frill being set on, which gets gradually wider on the shoulders and narrower again towards the waist at the back. Three epaulette frills are used over a plain coat-sleeve, and the basque also consists of a frill about six inches deep. The body, however, would be quite complete without this, and some will prefer it so. A band of the material, or a leather belt, is worn with the blouse. A narrow band and frill of material or lace finishes the neck.

Fig. 26.

Fig. 26. This is a stylish pattern for a lady's dust or shower-proof cloak, or pelisse, as it is now called. The under part is cut in princess shape, and fits to the waist, with breast pleats in front. There are also pleats at the back to give the necessary fulness to the skirt. The over-cape is of a very useful shape, and can be made so as to wear separately over a thin dress on a cool evening. The yoke and collar are of fancy material, bands of which are also laid on round the edges, as well as on the middle of the cape. Large gigot sleeves will be necessary, so as not to crush the dress sleeve. The trimming can be carried round the edges of the pelisse, if desired, but if the garment is to be used for wet weather it will be better plain. A cuff of the fancy stuff finishes the sleeve.

Fig. 27.

Fig. 27. This will be found a very suitable pattern, either for a cotton or woollen dress. Gathers such as are used on this bodice will require very little ironing, as they can be easily pulled into place and pressed on the wrong side. The dress fastens at the back, and is very easy to make. The plain fitting lining reaches to the waist, and over this the stuff is gathered so as to form a yoke, and again at the waist like a waistband. The body is piped with contrast or different coloured material, and the skirt is also trimmed with crossway bands of stuff piped in the same way. The double epaulettes on the sleeve are cut after the serpentine shape, and are piped and stitched at the bottom.

Fig. 28.

Fig. 28 shows a lady's dress suitable for tweed, cheviot, or serge, any of which can be bought in light textures for the present season. The skirt is bell-shaped, and made quite plain. The body opens over a plastron of silk, or a cloth waistcoat can be used, but we think the former is preferable. Wide revers are set on from the waist, and carried round to the back of the bodice to form a collar. The bodice can be used without a basque if preferred. That shown in our illustration is set on at the side seams, and is laid in pleats on either side, finishing in points at the back. The sleeve is made in one piece the entire length, and is moderately full. Six and a half to seven yards of material will be required.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 25, 26, 27, and 28, 6½d. each, post free. Address, "M.C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.